

## “Atlas/Mountains: Jan Hackaert’s Alpine Landscapes in the Atlas Blaeu-van der Hem”

Interleaved between the formidable array of maps and topographical views assembled for Laurens van der Hem’s *Atlas Blaeu* is a series of Alpine landscapes. Drawn in pen and ink by the Amsterdam artist Jan Hackaert between 1653 and 1656, the landscapes—especially within the context of Van der Hem’s massively expanded atlas—are peculiar. Unlike the city, port, and sea views that complement Van der Hem’s cartographic focus, Hackaert’s drawings are at once too nonspecific and too granular to serve the atlas’ geographic, ethnographic, martial, and navigational aims. Hackaert’s sheets evoke remote glens and perilous mountain terrains that seem to discourage Alpine travel, but do so with a startling level of morphological specificity. Other landscapes Van der Hem commissioned for his atlas by artists like Willem Schellinks and even other landscapes within Hackaert’s oeuvre tend to generalize flora and abbreviate natural environs at the expense of atmospheric concerns, but the description of physical geography in Hackaert’s Alpine drawings is forensic.

This paper approaches Hackaert’s mountainous landscapes from the perspective of their pictorial and functional strangeness. It investigates the motives behind their commission and inclusion within Van der Hem’s atlas, their anomalous technical and representational strategies, and the stakes of their visibility within Amsterdam’s mid-seventeenth-century intellectual circles. Invoking Hackaert’s provocative sheets as a test case for the early modern slippage between practices of geography, chorography, and geological inquiry, the paper argues that the Alps operated as a crucible for the development of new epistemological questions and as a catalyst and laboratory for artistic innovation.

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